

WASHINGTON POST

26 June 1983

ARTICLE APPEARED

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Jack Anderson

# The Polish Questions

Pope John Paul's visit to Poland is now history, and like all such events it is being studied exhaustively by U.S. intelligence agencies.

In fact, a top-secret interagency group has been meeting regularly since last December to assess what's happening in Poland and advise President Reagan on the proper U.S. response. The group consists of representatives of the Pentagon, State Department, Commerce Department, National Security Council, CIA, Treasury and Agriculture Department.

My sources tell me the interagency group was split on what policy the Reagan administration should follow on Poland. The debate was intense.

But eventually, the president was presented an options paper, which he signed. The options he approved, once implemented, could bring a relaxation of sanctions against Poland.

One source told my associate, Lucette Lagnado, that the basic quarrel among the interagency group was between the "detentists" and the "troglydites." The first group favors better relations with the Polish military regime; the other urges a continued hard line.

Each side is examining the intelligence reports on the pope's visit and its aftermath, hoping to find evidence that will support its own recommendations.

The main difficulty, of course, lies in predicting what the repercussions from the papal visit will be in Poland itself. There are two likely scenarios, according to reliable sources.

Many Poles were hoping for a "miracle" occurring as a result of the pope's visit. That clearly hasn't happened, so there is bound to be a general letdown as the Poles' euphoria over the papal visit is swallowed up in the drab reality of life under the communist regime.

Realistically, though, the Poles have understood that outright revolution was simply not in the cards.

Despite the underlying despair, according to this scenario, the pope's visit may serve to buoy up the Polish people and strengthen their stubborn determination to resist the military repression. The outlawed Solidarity union will gain encouragement from the visit, and will remain a political force to be reckoned with. Massive public demonstrations may once again sweep Poland on various anniversary dates this month and next.

In short, this view of Polish reaction considers the pope's visit a pivotal event that will put new life in the badly battered opposition movement.

The other scenario is less sanguine. It focuses on Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the military dictator. A shrewd politician, Jaruzelski so far has managed to placate his ultimate bosses in the Kremlin and beat back the power plays of the Kremlin's hard-line loyalists in the Polish Communist party, while at the same time stifling the dangerous Solidarity movement.

These sources see Jaruzelski as the big winner from the papal visit, which was a calculated risk for the military regime. He started out by winning a sort of truce in the months before Pope John Paul II arrived. With the exception of disturbances last May, there was a period of relative calm as Jaruzelski cleverly played on the people's fears that the pope would not be allowed to come.

But Jaruzelski needs more than just a temporary truce. He must convince Moscow, the outside world and especially the Polish people that he is in control and will remain so indefinitely. Only in this way can he finally turn his attention to the country's staggering financial and economic problems.

The general has no illusions about winning over the hearts and minds of his stubbornly anti-communist populace, much less the good will of Western leaders like Ronald Reagan. But he'll settle for acceptance in both cases.

Jaruzelski's pitch to the West will be that ideology should take a back seat to mutually profitable trade. An important part of this appeal will be the threat of default on Poland's enormous foreign loans, which would cost Western bankers more than Poland.

His pitch to the disenchanted Polish people will be that, like it or not, the communist regime is there to stay, and life will be a lot easier for all concerned if they accept this as a fact and drop their futile opposition.

Some administration sources predict that, in pursuit of this twin goal, Jaruzelski will make some dramatic gesture soon—perhaps declaring a general amnesty for political prisoners, or finally lifting martial law. Such a move would encourage the detentist camp in Washington to argue for an end to sanctions.